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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 13 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit for your attention a memorandum on the issue of changing the ethnocultural features in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Memorandum on the issue of changing the ethnocultural features in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia

The Republic of Azerbaijan has regularly presented to the international community the irrefutable evidence attesting to consistent and deliberate measures undertaken by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a view to changing the Azerbaijani ethnocultural features of these territories and consolidating the current status quo of the occupation.

Such measures by Armenia include, inter alia, conducting illegal archaeological excavations in historical places in the occupied territories and distorting their results, perpetrating barbarian acts of destruction of the Azerbaijani historical monuments of national and world importance, including mosques and other sacred shrines, presenting non-Armenian churches as their own, removing any traces of Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots, changing toponyms, falsifying inscriptions on the monuments and constructing other fake narratives.

In this regard, attempts by Armenia to use the religious factor to substantiate its policy of territorial expansionism and present its aggression against Azerbaijan as a religious conflict should be a matter of special concern for the international community.

Armenia defaces the Azerbaijani image of the occupied territories also by the methods of construction of Armenian churches therein. For example, the Armenian side has recently completed the construction of another Armenian church in the occupied Jabrayil district of the Republic of Azerbaijan (see attached photographs).*

In this context, Armenia bears full responsibility for violation of international humanitarian law, including the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Protocols of 1954 and 1999 thereto, which, inter alia, prohibit and prevent in relation to occupied territory any archaeological excavation or any alteration to, or change of use of, cultural property which is intended to conceal or destroy cultural, historical or scientific evidence.

Deliberate change of the ethnocultural picture of Jabrayil and other towns and settlements in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan attests once more that Armenia has no intention of withdrawing from the occupied territories and spares no effort to secure annexation of these territories and to mislead the international community about the roots and consequences of the conflict.

Azerbaijan calls upon the international community, in particular the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Co-Chairs, to condemn internationally wrongful acts of Armenia related to altering Azerbaijani ethnocultural features of the occupied territories and exercise pressure on this State to oblige it to denounce its territorial claims towards Azerbaijan and to end the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, as provided for in Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993).

* On file with the Secretariat and available for consultation.